

**Open Work Session**  
**Lobbyist for Wicomico County**  
**October 1, 2019**

Mr. Weston Young, Assistant Director of Administration, came before Council. Mr. Cannon said Council wanted to have this Work Session today because they were very surprised last Saturday when it was announced by the gentleman that Wicomico County had a lobbyist. He explained, Mr. Ellington stood up during the meeting they were having with the Eastern Shore Delegation and announced, pretty much to everyone's surprise, including the Eastern Shore Delegation, that Wicomico County now has a lobbyist. He said they invited the Executive, Mr. Strausburg, and Mr. Young to the table to give Council an exact idea of what Wicomico County, the Council, and the citizens of Wicomico County can expect to be the benefit of this, what the costs are, and exactly what caused this to come about.

Mr. Young said Council should be in receipt of a letter the Executive sent earlier today, so he is going to hit some of those points for the citizens at home. He said there are a series of State and Federal initiatives the Executive is interested in pursuing, and they felt the help of a professional lobbyist in the Annapolis area could assist them with that. He said, as far as nearby examples, Ocean City and Queen Anne's County utilize a lobbyist, but they are paying over twice what Wicomico County is paying. He said Wicomico County is paying what is the equivalent of \$30,000 for a year of work for the County on a variety of projects, and Mr. Ellington is with a company called State and Local Advisors.

Mr. Young reported, the County has an Airport Maintenance Tax Bill that has failed in the previous two sessions, if not three, so they are trying to be more strategic in the endeavor to get it passed. He said it is a jobs creation Bill that keeps getting killed in the House, but the Senate passes it, so they are trying a more concerted effort under the experience of Mr. Ellington, and that is what they are pursuing there.

Mr. Young said, as Council knows, each year they have a priority wish list with the Maryland Department of Transportation in the Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP). He said, historically, once they send this letter and give a presentation to the Maryland Department of Transportation, there is little follow up, except during the State budget process when these projects are being discussed, but they are looking for additional follow up with the CTP. He said they are also attempting to get a Maryland Port Administration budget line item to either help with the dredging of the Wicomico River, or funding the administration of the Delmarva Water Transport Committee. He said, in that same theme, they are looking for State and Federal Grant support. He said, for example, in their first meeting with Mr. Ellington, he asked them what they have asked for in the past for Bond Bills, and there was, basically, silence when they were asked that. He clarified, not to speak for Mr. Strausburg, but in his eight years with the County, he has never been approached about Bond Bills, and they did not know about Bond Bills, or what they were. He explained, this is a funding source that can be submitted by their Delegation and be used for a variety of projects. He said Mr. Ellington even asked them about the Governor's Discretionary Funds, which are funds the Governor can put towards projects, and he thinks the City of Salisbury funded the Amphitheater and Main Street through these sources. He clarified, his point is, there is funding at the State level they are not going after, but, with Mr. Ellington's guidance and connections, they feel it is clear that, for what they are paying, if he even gets one of their projects funded, he has more than paid for himself.

Mr. Young said, lastly, they are pursuing improved communications and connections with key State Executive and Legislative level contacts. He said this would improve Government relations, they would

have a seat at the table, and someone who is there representing the County and the County's interests because they cannot be in Annapolis every day, and they see value in that. He said that, basically, is where they are getting started from when the contact began.

Mr. Dodd asked how the City found out about the funding for the amphitheater, to which Mr. Young responded, he does not know. Mr. Dodd asked if the City has a lobbyist, to which Mr. Young responded, he is not certain.

Mrs. Acle asked if the City has a grant writer, to which Mr. Young responded, he believes they have a grant writer, but the County does not currently have a grant writer. Mr. Dodd said that is something he would rather see the County invest money in.

Mr. Hastings asked if they have asked Delegate Sample-Hughes to lead on the Bills given as she is now the number two person in the House, and she would be far, far more effective than a random person he has never heard of, though maybe he has heard of him once, but he is not part of any other major lobbying groups. Mr. Young said the random person submitting the Bill has been their Lower Shore Delegation. Mr. Hastings asked if this comes as a Delegation Bill that has passed, to which Mr. Young responded, it has been submitted in both Houses, and the Senate passes it each time, but the House is not passing it. Mr. Hastings asked if the Lead House Sponsor is probably not the most effective, to which Mr. Young responded, correct. He said they are working with Delegate Sample-Hughes, and they are hoping for her support for this project. He said, again, that is just one Bill they are going forward with.

Mr. Cannon said they are assuming they will have success with this, but they could equally have no difference whatsoever, to which Mr. Young responded, they could still hit the same roadblocks. He said they need to face it that the rural areas are outnumbered, especially in the House, to which Mr. Cannon responded, Council recognizes that, and everybody recognizes that. He said they have five Delegates who recognize that, and they have two senators who recognize that, but they work every day to try to achieve that goal, and he thinks they were as equally surprised as Council when they found out that this was budgeted. He clarified, actually, he cannot say budgeted because it was not budgeted, but was just \$30,000 that was spent because money was left over, he assumes, but he is not quite sure where the \$30,000 came from, to which Mr. Young responded, the \$30,000 came from the Executive's budget. He said, as Council is aware, for this fiscal year Council drastically cut the Executive's budget, and it would have been funded out of this fiscal year on a monthly basis, but, given the priorities they have, they funded it out of the FY19 leftovers. Mr. Cannon said Mr. Young said it would have been spent out of the Executive's budget, but Council cut it, yet there was nothing in the Executive's budget for a lobbyist last year. He clarified, there was nothing for a lobbyist that Council saw. Mr. Young explained, the line item that was cut from the Executive's budget is used for a variety of things that pop up. He said, in this case, they would have viewed the use of a lobbyist to, again, accomplish what they are trying to do at the State and Federal level. Mr. Cannon asked where the \$30,000 came from, to which Mr. Young responded, the Executive's budget. Mr. Cannon said he understands that, but is asking which area of his budget, to which Mr. Young responded, he does not have that in front of him, but he can pull that. Mr. Cannon said he does not think it could have come from salaries, to which Mr. Young responded, no, it would not have come from salaries. He said it would have been one-time contractual services, or one of those line items. Mr. Cannon said, if Council approves one-time contractual services, he thinks Council would have tried to have been careful enough to have budgeted what was needed, so he is still curious, and he thinks Council is still curious as to where \$30,000 came from, to which Mr. Young responded, he can get Council that answer. Mr. Cannon said what really surprised him was, if \$30,000 all of a sudden came out, he would expect that somehow or another with that amount of money it might involve a

concerted effort as to how to spend it instead of just saying it is here, so they are going to do this. He said Mrs. Acle talked about a grant writer, or something to that affect, and he knows Council has been trying to get some type of a grant writer budgeted, or at least a proposal for a grant writer, or someone who could brand and market the County, and at the same time look into writing grants. He said these are items that have been discussed before in prior Work Sessions and prior budget sessions, so he thinks even something along that line might have been a little bit easier to swallow than finding out they have a lobbyist. Mr. Young said he thinks, in terms of branding and marketing, the County would be talking about a public information officer (PIO) position, to which Mr. Cannon responded, not necessarily. He clarified, it depends on how they define a PIO position. He said a PIO position does not necessarily have that job description, to which Mr. Young responded, he just does not think a grant writer would.

Mrs. Acle said, in working with different nonprofits, they typically will have a grant writer, but then they also have a working Board, and none of Council are full time. She then asked, when they have a grant writer, plus they are trying to make that connection with the Government Officials and stakeholders who are making those decisions, is Mr. Young saying that is where the lapse would be? She said that is where she sees the lapse to be. She said, even if they had a grant writer, they still do not have a full-time Council to make those Legislative connections. Mr. Young said the way they handle grants now is each Department or Division is on their own. He said, for example, with flooding or water quality improvements, Mr. Baker and his staff at Public Works apply for those grants. He said, if it is Program Open Space and State money, it would be Recreation and Parks applying for the grant. He said a grant writer can help with the budgeting and the paperwork that is required, but, typically, they still need the subject matter experts in each Department. He said, again, a grant writer would not be helping them with the Airport Maintenance Tax Bill, which they feel is critical for development out at the Airport. He said a grant writer may be able to help improve their CTP letter with the State, but, again, that is pulled together by Public Works. He said a grant writer would not be the one requesting the Governor's Office and the Maryland Port Administration to include a budget line item. He said he thinks a grant writer could help out with the Local Management Board, and pretty much every Department that there is grant funding for, and they are not opposed to a grant writer. Mrs. Acle asked if they could use a Legislative liaison because she is trying to look for a solution in the long-term since there is obviously a need that they have a grant writer and a Legislative liaison. She asked, moving forward, is that what Mr. Young is saying would work with those two working together, to which Mr. Young responded, in terms of the Legislative liaison, he thinks they are leaning on Mr. Ellington at the moment to fill that gap.

Mr. Davis said Mr. Ellington is a lobbyist who goes to Annapolis, and is lobbying to get the grant funding, and, as Mr. Young said, for the Bond Bill, and the Airport, but he is still going to have to rely on the Delegation to introduce this stuff, to which Mr. Young responded, they plan to continue working with the Delegation, and they are not bypassing the Lower Shore Delegation. Mr. Davis said they discussed the Bill about the Airport, and it was brought up in the meeting that Mr. Culver had, and, as one person on the Senate said, it always passes the Senate. He said it passed the Senate three years in a row, but, when it gets to the House, he is doing the same thing over and over, and is not changing the mindset, but is using the same tactic. He said he thinks if they keep using the same tactic it is going to keep failing, and he is not understanding that. He said Council understands that the Delegation has one democrat, and the rest are republicans, so, nothing against that, but they have to realize that when they go across the Bay the odds change. He said they should address that and change their thinking, and not keep thinking the way they are thinking now that they are the almighty powerful from the Shore because, when they get up to Annapolis, they are nothing, and he does not think the lobbyist is going to change their mindset. He clarified, the lobbyist will probably do his job, but, if they do not change the mindset of their Delegation, they are still going to be nowhere, to which Mr. Young responded, Mr. Davis is 100

percent correct in terms of them not changing their strategy. He said they have submitted it the same way several years in a row, and they need to learn from the previous failures, and that is what they are using Mr. Ellington for, but, again, it may not pass. Mr. Davis said Mr. Ellington can do his work as far as getting their money, and getting the people there, but until they change the mindset of their Delegation that they have to work with the people on the other side of the Shore, they are still going to get nothing. Mr. Young said they can encourage their Delegation to do that. He said the Delegates do not report to the Executive, although they serve them, but he is not saying they are not working for them. Mr. Davis said the Delegation represents them, and they put them in Office, but until they start realizing they were elected by the people of Wicomico County whether they are republican or democrat, if they do not change their mindset and their thinking, they are going to still be doing the same thing for the next three years. Mr. Young said, to be successful, they need to be strategic, and this is why they are leaning on somebody who has 30+ years of experience in this world. He said, compared to what other people are paying for lobbyists, they think it is a good price, and they have been happy with the work they have given to Mr. Ellington. Mr. Davis said that might be true, but Mr. Ellington is going to have to change the mindset of the Delegation to get things going and make his job successful. He said, otherwise, Mr. Ellington will look like they have looked for the past several years, to which Mr. Young agreed.

Mr. Holloway said Mr. Young just said Mr. Ellington has 30 years of experience, but the experience he read about is as a campaign manager, and not necessarily a lobbyist. Mr. Young clarified, that is 30 years of connections, and knowing people in the various roles, their Deputies, and their key staff. Mr. Holloway said that is not being a lobbyist, to which Mr. Young responded, yes, but a lobbyist is a lot about networking, introducing people, and having those connections. Mr. Holloway said Mr. Young said they paid him \$30,000 upfront, so, in other words, he got a lump sum up front before services were rendered, to which Mr. Young responded, correct. Mr. Holloway then asked if that is a normal thing the County does, to which Mr. Young responded, it varies depending on deliverables. He said, in this case, given their budget had been cut, they paid for it up front because they would not have been able to afford what they felt they needed in fiscal year 20, so they paid with FY19 money. Mr. Holloway said he often hears about government budgets, whether it is the school system, or any department, that they have money left over so they better spend it. He said he has heard that many times over the years, to which Mr. Young responded, they think there will be a good return on investment on this. Mr. Holloway said they do not know that. He said, if they paid him \$2,500 a month, they could have gaged that, to which Mr. Young responded, if they did not have their budget cut, yes. Mr. Cannon said their budget cut had nothing to do with that, to which Mr. Young responded, they would have used that money. Mr. Cannon said that job was not even being considered, to which Mr. Young responded, Mr. Cannon does not know that. Mr. Cannon said Council should have known, to which Mr. Young responded, if they look at when the contract was signed, it was in the previous fiscal year. Mr. Cannon said Council should have known, and that is the discussion here. He said Council did not know it, the public did not know it, and nobody knew it until this gentleman stood up and explained to a room of County Councilmembers and Eastern Shore Delegates that he was all of a sudden a lobbyist for Wicomico County. He said they did not know about it, and they should have known about it. He said, if it was that important to spend \$30,000 of taxpayers' money, it should have been in the budget, and if there was any type of planning involved, it should have been in the budget.

Mr. Young said communication has been at an all-time low between these two Branches of Government, to which Mr. Cannon responded, communication has been low coming out of the Executive Branch, and they know that. Mr. Culver then started speaking out from the audience. Mr. Cannon said the Executive is in the back of the room, but if he wants to sit at the table, he is welcome to sit at the table, and Council invites him all the time. Mr. Culver, still speaking from the audience, said

Council keeps throwing darts. Mr. Cannon again said, Mr. Culver is sitting in the back of the room, and if he wants to come to the table, Council would be glad to have him come to the table.

Mr. Cannon said they have an issue where all they are trying to do is find out, if something is going to be done that is this important, why Mr. Culver does not inform the public or Council about what is being done, and that is why this elected Body is here. Mr. Culver then came before Council and said Council did not inform his Office when Council decided to have an Internal Auditor and Assistant Internal Auditor, and this is within the purview of the Executive Office. Mr. Cannon then asked Mrs. Hurley if he is not mistaken that the Internal Auditor is in the Charter, to which Mrs. Hurley responded, it was a Legislative Bill that was introduced. Mr. Cannon said it was a Legislative Bill that went to the public with a Public Hearing. Mr. Culver again said this is within his purview. Mr. Cannon then asked what part about the Internal Auditor Mr. Culver does not understand, and where was Council wrong on that, to which Mr. Culver responded, he understands it perfectly well, and this is within his purview.

Mrs. Acle asked if there are ways they can measure Mr. Ellington's success and what he is doing, to which Mr. Young responded, sure. Mrs. Acle asked if Council can be updated every three months, to which Mr. Young responded, they can give updates on the progress of all of these things.

Mr. Cannon said Mr. Holloway made a very good point that they bought this guy for one year, and, if nothing happens in three months, the taxpayers are already out \$30,000, to which Mr. Young responded, again, they think they will have a good return on investment, and they should be able to show that however Council would like to see it. He said, again, if they get one project funded through a bond Bill, such as the Bookmobile, or Henry Parker Field 7.5, or the improvements they are asking for at Corrections, or the County-owned building that houses the Extension Office, it will have more than have paid for the \$30,000, which, again, is out of over a \$150-million-dollar budget. Mr. Holloway said the County has been getting things funded for years. He clarified, he understands what Mr. Young is saying, but it is not as if they are sitting there in Wicomico County without receiving any funds from the State or so-called Federal Government. He said they have been getting funds, and they get funds all the time, but they could use a grant writer because that might help.

Mr. Holloway said he has several issues with this, and he is going to get into one of the big ones in a minute, but for Council to be told at that meeting when that gentleman stood up and explained he was their new lobbyist, why was that not asked to be put on the Council Agenda when they hired him to tell Council they had hired a lobbyist? He clarified, Council probably would not have liked it then, but it would have been a lot less of an impact than it was at the Legislative meeting, after which Council started getting calls from their Legislators asking what was going on at that meeting. He said he had a phone call like that asking what was going on, and he had to say he does not know. Mr. Culver asked if Mr. Holloway's phone call was before the Legislative meeting, to which Mr. Holloway responded, no, it was after, and this person said they were shocked, but he told him not any more shocked than Council.

Mr. Holloway said Council did not approve the funding in March for Poplar Hill, and Mr. Ellington was hired in April, to which Mr. Young responded, he thinks it went from May 2019 to May 2020. Mr. Holloway said the Executive said it would not have been a conflict of interest because Council did not approve the funding, and tabled it. He said Poplar Hill was still being lobbied at MACo very heavily, which was in August, at which time he had a conversation with one of the State Senators. He said Mr. Ellington then came up to him and wanted to introduce him to somebody named Kevin Dorrance from Transform Care. He clarified, this was in August, and Mr. Ellington never introduced himself as their lobbyist. He said he had seen Mr. Ellington in passing at different times, but he did not say he was their

lobbyist. He then asked why he would not have said he was their new lobbyist, but wanted to introduce him to Kevin Dorrance? He said the other thing that is troubling is, when he talked to the gentleman that day from Transform Care, they were ready to move in. He said Mr. Dorrance was telling him it was going to be a great thing, they were going to be moving in, they are going to grow tomatoes, and they have a blueberry farm in Texas. He said then he came to find out that Mr. Ellington has a lobbying firm, and a fellow named Randal Nash, who is a partner in that firm, represents Transform Care. He then asked why the Executive's Office does not see that as a conflict, to which Mr. Young responded, Poplar Hill is a State facility, and the Executive's Office remains supportive of repurposing the site into a regional treatment facility. He clarified, they are not actively working on anything that involves County involvement with that facility because it is a State facility. Mr. Cannon clarified, what Mr. Holloway is trying to say is that their lobbyist was lobbying for that, to which Mr. Young responded, he thinks he was introducing him, which is what they do, they make connections. He said, if he was asked by Senator Mary Beth Carozza to introduce Mr. Holloway to somebody, he is going to do it because he makes connections. He said they are an interested service provider that would like to go in that building and open up a treatment facility, and the County has no role in that. Mr. Cannon said Mr. Young is talking about the Wicomico County lobbyist, who nobody knew existed, lobbying one of their County Councilmembers. Mr. Holloway said he never introduced himself, and he knows Mr. Young is having a tough time defending this, and that is fine. Mr. Cannon said they could really direct the questions to Mr. Culver, and not Mr. Young, to which Mr. Culver responded, Mr. Holloway asked him about this when he was talking to Mrs. Acle, and Mr. Holloway asked him who this guy was, and he said Transform Care would be the one they are looking at taking over Poplar Hill, and why. He said he told Mr. Holloway he is trying to go around Council and let the State work directly with the provider, and get the County out of it altogether. He then asked if that was exactly what he told Mr. Holloway, to which Mr. Holloway responded, no, he does not remember that. He clarified, Mr. Culver might have said that, but he does not remember. Mr. Cannon asked Mr. Culver if he told Mr. Holloway at that time that this guy was their lobbyist, to which Mr. Culver responded, no, he did not. Mr. Cannon said that is unusual. Mrs. Acle said she was there for that conversation, and she does not think Mr. Ellington actually came up in that moment, but they were talking about Transform Care. Mr. Culver said that was the point.

Mr. Culver said they hired Mr. Ellington because they have several things they have to get through, and, just as Mr. Davis said, it is not working right. He said they did not submit that Bill or tell the Delegate to submit that Bill on behalf of Wicomico County this year. He said Mr. Ellington is the one who suggested they get Delegate Sheree Sample-Hughes to help them go through with that, so that was a good point that was brought to them. He said Delegate Sample-Hughes, as they know, asked several good questions the other day, so that was the point. He said, with Mr. Ellington's expertise, he has 30 years, as Mr. Young said, of knowing these people, and he can open doors they cannot open. Mr. Cannon asked why the County would need a County lobbyist to tell them to use one of their Eastern Shore Delegates, to which Mr. Culver responded, because he knows the work. Mr. Young clarified, that is just one element. Mr. Cannon said they use Delegate Sample-Hughes anyway. Mr. Young said part of this will be getting Delegate Jay Walker, who keeps killing the Bill, down to UMES to see that it benefits UMES. He said it is his understanding that Delegate Walker feels they are asking for a rich person's tax break, but it is a jobs Bill. He said he cannot explain how the Delegates have pursued these Bills previously, but it was automatically pre-filed by the same Delegate with no different strategy proposed to their knowledge.

Mrs. Acle said she would just like to see some outcomes, what Mr. Ellington is working on, and how far he has gotten in three months so Council can see if this is an effective approach or not, to which Mr. Young responded, sure.

Mr. Cannon said he thinks a discussion is going to have to be held with the Eastern Shore Delegation as to why the Executive feels it is necessary to bring a lobbyist in without informing anybody of this, and why he is having the lobbyist work on issues that he is sure the Delegation feels they could handle as well quite competently. He clarified, Mr. Culver will probably want to have a discussion with the Eastern Shore Delegation as to what he thinks their role is.

Mr. Dodd said, at the meeting, Mr. Ellington stood up, and, like everyone has said, it was a surprise when he said he was working for them, the County Council and the County Executive, and Council did not know that. He said he asked Mr. Ellington how long he had been working for them, and he said a couple months, and then sat down. He said he also asked him for how much, but he did not answer. He said Mr. Young said he was hired in May or June. He then asked, what has he done for \$7,500 in three months, to which Mr. Young responded, as he mentioned, the various projects he is working on.

Mr. Young said he has a good example in terms of Council not knowing who the Executive Office has hired. He then asked who on Council knows who is doing the design for the Public Safety Building, to which Mr. Holloway responded, they do not know because nobody told them. Mr. Young clarified, the point is the Executive Office has full-time priorities, full-time projects they are working on, and full-time activities, and the communication between the two branches has not been good. Mr. Davis asked why they would need a lobbyist to tell them who is designing the building, to which Mr. Young responded, he was just saying that Council does not know who else they have hired on a variety of topics.

Mr. Dodd said this County has been in existence for 152 years, and has never had a lobbyist, to which Mrs. Acle responded, they have never had a policy and procedure manual for Council either. Mr. Dodd said the three biggest lobbyists are Mr. Culver, Mr. Strausburg, and Mr. Young, to which Mr. Young responded, and they are running the County, and are not able to go to Annapolis, but they can ask Ocean City why they do not trust in their Lower Shore Delegation like what is being implied. Mr. Holloway said they would not say that, to which Mr. Young responded, they are not saying that either, but they are saying they have a Bill that keeps getting killed, and that is one project. He said, again, it is contacting these various entities and working behind the scenes saying Wicomico County needs more resources. Mr. Dodd said they do not have a big tent down at Dulles, so he does not see them getting results, to which Mr. Young responded, they do not always need to go with the flashy options, and they would probably pay over twice the amount they are paying to go with the biggest and the tallest.

Mr. Holloway said he wants to make it really clear he is not putting Mr. Ellington down, but he is a businessman, and hopefully doing his job. He said Mr. Ellington said he is working for Council, and has been here since June, but Council has not received reports of anything he has done, and he thinks they should request at least a weekly or biweekly report of his activities. Mr. Culver said he works under the Executive's Office, so it comes underneath the Executive Office, but they will be glad to give Council a report, and Mr. Young just told Council he will. Mr. Young said they will figure out the best frequency for that, but they will be glad to tell Council what Mr. Ellington is working on for the Executive Branch. Mr. Davis suggested they also include the Eastern Shore Delegation on what he is working on because it seems to him that, no matter how great of a job Mr. Ellington is doing, it will still have to go through a Delegate to introduce this stuff, to which Mr. Young responded, he is meeting with them and working with them. Mr. Cannon asked how he can be meeting with them when he has been here for two months and they did not even know he existed, to which Mr. Young responded, some of them did. Mr. Cannon said some is not very good, and he does not know how some could be considered an answer to that. Mr. Holloway asked which ones knew, to which Mr. Young responded, if he speaks with Senator Carozza, she

will tell him she knew about him. Mr. Holloway said he ran her campaign, to which Mr. Young responded, he knows her. Mr. Cannon said he was her campaign manager, so of course she knows.

Mr. Cannon said the only other thing he would like to address is that two or three times Mr. Young has referenced the communication. He said this Council sits here two times a month every single month of the year, so anything is wide open for the Executive Branch to sit here and discuss. He said Council is held to discussions in the public, and they cannot hold discussions behind closed doors, so to say there is a lack of communication, and try to infer that it is the fault of this Council, they are here. Mr. Young said he was not implying that, to which Mr. Cannon responded, he thinks he was. He said they are there every other week for any discussions they want to have, so he cannot see how they could possibly suggest the lack of communication might be because there is a lack of effort on this side of the table, to which Mr. Culver responded, maybe they can get up during the five minutes of comment time and tell Council what is going on in the County. Mr. Cannon said they can schedule an Open Work Session for every single meeting if they want to. Mr. Culver said they have asked for Open Work Sessions, to which Mr. Cannon responded, no they have not. Mr. Culver said they have a stack of things they have asked to send over to Council for Work Sessions. Mr. Cannon then asked Mrs. Hurley if Council has ever turned down an Open Work Session from the Executive Branch, to which Mrs. Hurley responded, no. Mr. Cannon said the only thing they have turned down is when Council asked for an Open Work Session and Mr. Culver demanded that he would only discuss it in Closed Session, and he informed Mr. Culver it would be illegal to do it in a Closed Session. Mr. Culver said personnel does not come under an Open Work Session, to which Mr. Cannon responded, he does not know what Mr. Culver is referencing. Mr. Culver said Council has a personnel session coming up right after this, and has suggested his staff come to the table about the legal issues, but they will not be there for that because, basically, Council received a letter from Mr. Nick Rice, and they have talked to the State Procurement. He said they need to talk about that in Open Work Session if Council wants, to which Mr. Cannon responded, Council is meeting to discuss that after this Work Session. Mr. Culver clarified, no, they are not meeting after this, to which Mr. Cannon responded, Council is meeting after this. Mr. Culver said Council can do what they want to, to which Mr. Cannon responded, Council is trying to keep an open line of communication. Mrs. Acle said this is not productive, to which Mr. Cannon responded, he does not want the public to get the perception that, based on Mr. Young's statement, there is something this Council is refusing to meet about with the Executive Branch because that is not true. Mr. McCain said he agrees with Mrs. Acle. He then asked, if nothing else, can they just move on to the next session, to which Mr. Cannon responded, he is okay with that.

Mr. Cannon said he does not think the Executive has answered their questions, and he would like to know where the \$30,000 came from, and how that happened to be. He said Mr. Holloway made a very good point that they are committed to \$30,000, but what will happen in two to three months if this guy goes to jail, for example. Mr. Culver said he will not be paying him if he is in jail, to which Mr. Cannon responded, he has already paid him. Mr. Culver said he would be getting the money back, so they do not have to worry about that. Mr. Cannon said he cannot get the money back. Mrs. Acle said it is the same with maintenance of effort, and here they are with the lowest PARCC scores in the State.

Mr. Holloway said he knows they are supposed to be moving on, but he finds this real hard to understand. He then asked how they came up with the \$30,000 to pay Mr. Ellington, to which Mr. Culver responded, it started off higher, and they actually beat him down in price, just as Mr. Young said. Mr. Holloway asked if the \$30,000 was what was left over in the budget, to which Mr. Culver responded, it was from different parts of their budget that they would normally carry forward. Mr. Holloway asked if they had \$30,000 left over, so he paid him what they had, to which Mr. Culver responded, no. He said



they still put money back in towards the budget for this year now. Mr. Young said he will have to confirm, but he thinks some of it was when they had the tax ditch mapping work done and had some leftover funds, to which Mr. Cannon responded, he would think someone would know where \$30,000 came from. Mr. Young clarified, he just does not have it in front of him, but he can find that out. Mr. Cannon said he thinks if any of Council spent \$30,000 they would know where it came from.

Mr. Hastings said he spent a couple of years working with the Legislature, so he knows what it takes to get a lot of this passed, and get a lot of things through, and he has worked on numerous Bond Bills. He said it looks like the difference here is that they are trying to go between Executive Branch lobbying and Legislative Branch lobbying, which are two different key avenues, especially for funds from the Governor's personal budget, or for going for money from supplemental budgets. He said there are a lot of things they can do in order to get further funds from the State. He said he just wants to say he knows they have often had a lack of communication between the two Branches, but, from here on out, that is going to change, and he personally wants to be able to do all he can. He said he knows a lot about how they can move this forward, he knows a lot of the key players, and has spent over a decade now working with the Legislative process in order to get a lot of these Bills passed, so he wants to be able to help move these forward because these are far too important for them to allow to fail again. He said they have had a lot of conversations about the Airport Maintenance Tax Bill in groups, such as the Rural Maryland Council, and they can get those groups to help push this along even if their Delegation is not as effective as they would like them to be. He said, regardless, he personally wants to make sure he is involved, and he wants to be helpful because these issues are far too important. He said he appreciates that they are at least trying to move these forward, and not let them fail again. Mr. Culver said they appreciate Mr. Hastings' willingness to work with them on this. He said it is not just the Maintenance Bill, but there is so much more with the Airport. He said there is hangar money, there is extension of runway, and Mr. Ellington knows people at the MAA better than they do, and that is why they are trying to get somebody who can get in there to help them open the door so they can get more funding, and they have so much they can do out there. He said part of the grant money they are trying to get would be more money for the water going out there, so if they can get part of that and more of it paid for, that is further ahead Wicomico County becomes.

Mr. Holloway said he has heard the same argument about the Airport Manager that she would be able to do all of this, to which Mr. Culver responded, she is applying to the FAA, and she is doing all of that. Mr. Hastings said it takes a team effort, without a doubt, to get these through the State and the Legislature, and through all the hurdles. He said he thinks it is going to take a team effort going forward, and he thinks they all need to be focused on that. Mr. Cannon said everybody agrees with what is needed, but he thinks it is the process that sometimes is in question. There was no further discussion.

*Signatures on next page*

**Open Work Session  
Lobbyist for Wicomico County  
October 1, 2019**



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John T. Cannon, President



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Larry W. Dodd, Vice President, District 3




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Ernest F. Davis, District 1



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Nicole Acle, District 2



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Josh Hastings, District 4



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Joe Holloway, District 5



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William R. McCain, At-Large



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Laura Hurley, Council Administrator